

# Procurement Advisory

## ADVISORY NO. 112B

### Continuous Learning Management for USDA's Acquisition Workforce

#### 1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this Advisory is to define and communicate the requirements, roles, and processes involved in managing continuous learning for USDA's Acquisition Workforce. Management details discussed herein were collaboratively developed by USDA's Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) and each contracting activity's ACM Designee, and subsequently reviewed/approved by the Procurement Policy Division Chief and ultimately the Senior Procurement Executive.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

Statutory and regulatory guidance from the *References* listed in Section 3 explain that continuous learning serves to enhance Acquisition Workforce members' professional development, thereby improving the outcomes of Federal Acquisitions and the overall quality of services rendered. To ensure a well-rounded Acquisition Workforce, the ACM encourages the Acquisition Workforce to achieve continuous learning points by a variety of methods to include training, seminars, mentoring, etc.

#### 3. REFERENCES

[The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting \(FAC-C\) Program – May 7, 2014](#) or latest version

[Revisions to the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives \(FAC-COR\) - September 6, 2011](#) or latest version

[The Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers \(FAC-P/PM\) – December 16, 2013](#) or latest version

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#### 4. ACTIONS

Monitoring progress and completion of continuous learning (CL) is a joint effort between an employee, their Supervisor, and the Bureau CL Manager (typically the ACM designated in the USDA agencies (ACMD)). The USDA ACM, located in the Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM), provides oversight and assists, when needed, to answer questions, clarify roles, and help ensure a streamlined effort department-wide. It is the employee's responsibility to know when their two-year period ends for CL completion, as well as, understand that all required training must be completed, submitted in the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS), and ultimately approved by the

Bureau CL Manager prior to the end of the two-year CL period. The tracking of CL for FAC-C, FAC-COR, and FAC-P/PM certified employees begins on the day of initial certification. Points are recorded automatically when an individual completes training for which they registered in FAITAS. CL events like published articles, mentoring, registered training independent of FAITAS, etc. may also be tracked through approval of a CL Point Request. When submitting a CL Point Request adequate documentation must be uploaded in FAITAS by the requesting employee so that the Supervisor and Bureau CL Manager may verify completion of CL events. Examples of appropriate documentation to upload include:

- HR document, e-mail, letter, or internal agency training certificate describing and confirming rotational, developmental, and/or mentoring assignments. Each document should show title, completion date, and signature of Supervisor or ACMD;
- Course completion certificates;
- Transcripts;
- E-mail/letter from a professional organization verifying the requesting employee attended or presented at meetings/seminars/conferences;
- Copy of published article; and
- Event objective or contents, etc.

The CL Point Request requires the requesting employee to indicate how many CLPs an event is worth. Please use the following table from the FAI website when determining CLP value. The FAI website ([www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov)) provides the most recent point allocations for different CL events so checking the website periodically for changes is encouraged.

SAMPLE EVENT	POINTS
Formal or Informal Training (such as FAI/DAU classroom or online courses)	1 CLP per hour of instruction*
Accredited Higher Education Courses (such as university courses)	Generally, 10 CLPs per semester or quarter hour
Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 CLPs per CEU**
Equivalency Exam	Same points as awarded for the course
Conference, training or seminar presentation	1 CLP per hour, including preparation; maximum of 20 CLPs per year
Association Leadership Role	1 CLP per hour; maximum of 20 CLPs per year
Professional License or Certification	20 to 40 CLPs
Publication	1 CLP per hour of material preparation; maximum of 20 CLPs per year
On-the-job Experiential Learning	1 CLP per hour of activity; maximum 20 CLPs per year
Mentoring	1 CLP per hour of activity; maximum 20 CLPs per year
Rotational or Developmental Assignment	Based on learning achieved and length of assignment/detail. Generally:
12 month assignment/detail	80 CLPs
9 months	65 CLPs
6 months	45 CLPs
3 months	35 CLPs
2 months	30 CLPs
1 month	20 CLPs

\*If the training certificate does not indicate the number of CLPs nor CEUs earned, the attendee is responsible to upload supporting documentation indicating the number of CLPs earned for the event.

\*\*If the training certificate only indicates the number of CEUs earned, the CLPs must be calculated using the CEU value provided in the table above.

FAITAS will indicate when employees complete the required number of CLPs for maintaining certification. The employee must then submit a CL Achievement Request for their supervisor's approval; once approved, the request will be reviewed for approval by the Bureau CL Manager (BCLM). The BCLM is the final approver for accepting CL events and their associated CL points (CLPs). CLPs will not be accepted for attending duplicative events (courses, seminars, conferences, etc.) within a four year period.

### **FAC-C, Contracting Officers, and all GS-1102s and 1105s**

In accordance with the latest OMB Memorandum on the FAC-C program, all employees with a contracting warrant (regardless of series) are required to complete 80 hours of acquisition-related CLPs every two years. Failure to meet this requirement will result in suspension or revocation of the employee's warrant until their CLP requirements are met. Additionally, all FAC-C certified employees (regardless of series) are required to complete 80 hours of acquisition-related CLPs every two years. Failure to meet this requirement will result in revocation of the employee's FAC-C certification until their CLP requirement is met. USDA also requires any GS-1102 or GS-1105 who is not warranted or does not have a FAC-C certification to complete 80 CLPs every two years and adhere to their Bureau CL Manager's guidance on tracking CL. Only time spent learning the contracting competencies located at [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov) will be considered as acquisition-related CLPs.

### **FAC-COR**

In accordance with the latest OMB Memorandum on the FAC-COR program, all Level I certified CORs must complete 8 CLPs every two years. All Level II and III certified CORs must complete 40 CLPs every two years. CORs should complete CL courses that will assist them with their duties as a COR. For example, the Federal Acquisition Institute offers various prepaid (free of charge to USDA) online CL Modules that will better prepare CORs for their COR duties. Courses like the annual USDA IT Security Awareness training are NOT acceptable for credit toward continuous learning. Only time spent learning COR competencies located at [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov) will be considered as COR-related CLPs. Failure of COR's to meet CLP requirements will result in revocation of appointment/designation to any assigned contracts. Eligibility for reappointment/redesignation as a COR to the contract will not occur until continuous learning requirements are met and a new FAC-COR application is approved.

### **FAC-P/PM**

In accordance with the latest OMB Memorandum on the FAC-P/PM program, all employees who are FAC-P/PM certified at any level must complete 80 CLPs every two years. Training and/or developmental experiences for FAC-P/PM certified employees should address at least one of the following competencies:

- Requirements Development and Management Processes;
- Systems Engineering;
- Test and Evaluation;
- Life Cycle Logistics;
- Contracting;
- Business, Cost and Financial Management; and/or
- Leadership.

Only time spent developing the aforementioned competencies, also located at [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov), will be considered as FAC-P/PM CLPs.

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Procurement Advisories are issued by the Procurement Policy Division of the Office of Procurement and Property Management, Departmental Management, USDA, Dorothy Lilly, Chief, and posted on the USDA World Wide Web site at the following URL: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/policy/advisories.html>. If you have questions or comments regarding this advisory please contact the OPPM Procurement Policy Division at [procurement.policy@dm.usda.gov](mailto:procurement.policy@dm.usda.gov).

**EXPIRATION DATE:** Effective upon issue date until canceled. **[END]**